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Robert Healy
City Manager
Cambridge City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

May 30, 2006

Dear Mr. Healy:

I am writing in response to City Council Order No. 30, dated April 24, 2006, that requested a report on the number of Cambridge Housing Authority units that are not suitable for habitation.

At this time, seven apartments are currently off-line at Jefferson Park (state). These units were vacated because of extensive mold throughout the apartments that could adversely affect the health of residents who have respiratory conditions. Mold in these units is caused by a number of sources, including inferior ventilation and water penetration through the brick exteriors of the buildings. Although the CHA takes units off-line as a last resort, we were unable to fund a comprehensive remediation of these units with our current level of funding from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The CHA had several meetings in May with representatives from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to discuss a variety of ways to address the problem of mold in these apartments (and many others, to a lesser extent). We have proposed a pilot program in one building with nine apartments, two vacants and seven occupied, that would try out three methods of remediation to see which one is most effective. These methods range from simple treatment of a moldicide directly on the affected area and the subsequent painting of the entire apartment with a paint specially treated with a moldicide to installation of exhaust fans that duct to the hallway and kitchen. In addition, we proposed treating and painting all the remaining units at Jefferson Park and upgrading ventilation. DHCD has tentatively agreed to fund these proposals and we hope to start work this summer on the pilot program. We anticipate that this work will allow us to reoccupy the vacant units by early this fall.

The proposed work and funding from DHCD described above will provide a short-term solution to occupying vacant units at Jefferson Park. Unfortunately, the long-term viability of Jefferson Park needs to be addressed. The CHA has requested that DHCD fund a Master Plan that will identify and confirm the underlying problems at the site, define and analyze the

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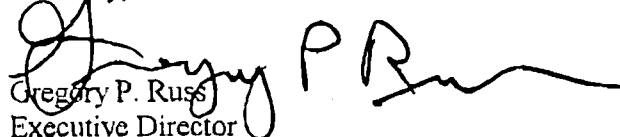
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problems, make recommendations and identify opportunities to ensure that Jefferson Park can remain a stable community for low-income families. The cost for completing such a Master Plan with an extensive resident and community involvement is estimated to be \$200,0000. Our current dialogue with DHCD has been positive and we are cautiously optimistic that they will agree to fund the Master Plan that we believe will be an essential tool to preserve this valuable housing resource.

The City Council and City Manager have been supportive of our efforts to improve the CHA's state public housing portfolio. We appreciate this interest and look forward to working closely with the City to pursue our common goal of maintaining and improving housing conditions for residents who live in these developments.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,


Gregory P. Russ
Executive Director